Building on Force XXI Task Force And Brigade Recon Troop Scout Platoons

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With the collapse of the wall dividing East and West Germany on 8-9 November 1989, the Cold War, as we new it, came to an end. The end of the Cold War, along with the Army's technological revolution, justified the Army's reduction in size in the 1990s.

Technology also allowed us to do more with less, and forced us to rewrite the doctrine and standard operating procedures we use to implement these new tools of the battlefield. The recent development and fielding of the Brigade Reconnaissance Troop (BRT) and the development of the first Initial Brigade Combat Team (IBCT), with its Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition (RSTA) Squadron, has caused us once again to review how our reconnaissance assets are configured and employed on today's battlefields.

Fielding equipment like the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), the brigade reconnaissance troop forward, and JSTARS, the commander now has eyes that see the enemy much deeper in the reconnaissance battlespace. With Strikers and Colts forward as part of the brigade reconnaissance troop, as well as air support, the commander can now effectively shape the battlefield and degrade the enemy with indirect artillery and MLRS fires prior to any direct fire contact. The RSTA Squadron appears to be designed to meet this forward battlefield shaping mission as well, although there seems to be a question of air assets being part of this organization.

It appears the organizations like the BRT, IBCT, and RSTA Squadron are based on the technology and capabilities of equipment not yet fielded or developed. Equipment like the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), Reconnaissance Vehicle (RV), Mobile Gun System (MGS), Command Vehicle (CV), and Long Range Advanced Scout Surveillance System (LRAS3) will overcome some tremendous shortfalls in reconnaissance today.

An example of one such shortfall is adequate optics for the HMMWV scouts. Because HMMWV scouts have such poor optics, they have to close with the enemy to the point that their survivability is regularly compromised in order to provide accurate reporting and the ability to paint a clear picture for the commander. With the fielding of the LRAS3, this problem will be tremendously reduced and visual standoff will be greatly increased. But this technological change will not be fielded for some time.

The question now is, how do we provide the commander with the intelligence he requires and sustain survivability for our BRT and task force scouts with the equipment that is currently available?

This article contains proposals and techniques on training, configuring, and equipping today's scouts to remain effective until we develop and field the equipment and units of tomorrow. It is vital that we take the time to accurately test and develop future equipment and units to ensure they meet the needs of tomorrow's battlefields. It is just as vital that we attempt to correct shortfalls faced by today's scouts.

Manning

Modern manuals and standard operating procedures are not written for the current six-HMMWV scout platoon configuration. *FM 17-98, Scout Platoon Manual* dated April 1999 refers only to the ten-HMMWV scout platoons or the six-CFV scout platoons. *FM 17-98* states that these platoons can sustain only three OPs for long durations (over 12 hours). Once in the Force XXI, six-HMMWV platoon configuration, manpower will only allow two long duration OPs. The three-man crews of the HMMWV have always had a difficult time conducting OP/LP operations, let alone security patrols as well.

HMMWV scout crews are also incapable of dismounting a pair of scouts forward of their vehicle to clear danger areas and intervisibility lines, and still leave enough personnel on the HMMWV to maneuver or conduct actions on contact. Scouts constantly die in training because they do not dismount and clear forward of their vehicle. This problem will be resolved with the fielding of the new RV which will

Battalion Task Force Scout Platoon

Headquarters Section

	Vehicle #1 M3 CFV	**Vehicle #4** M3 CFV
	LT (PLT LDR) SGT (Gunner) SPC (Driver) PFC (Loader) PFC (Scout)	SFC (PSG) SPC (Gunner)* SPC (Driver) PFC (Loader/Mechanic) PFC (Medic)

ALPHA Section **Vehicle #2** M1026 HMMWV	**BRAVO Section** **Vehicle #5** M1026 HMMWV	**CHARLIE Section** **Vehicle #7** M3 CFV	**DELTA Section** **Vehicle #9** M3 CFV
SSG (Sec Sergeant) SGT (Gunner)* SPC (Driver) PFC (Scout)	SSG (Sec Sergeant) SGT (Gunner)* SPC (Driver) PFC (Scout)	SSG (Sec Sergeant) SPC (Gunner)* PFC (Driver) PFC (Loader) PFC (Scout)	SSG (Sec Sergeant) SPC (Gunner)* PFC (Driver) PFC (Loader) PFC (Scout)
Vehicle #3 M1025 HMMWV	**Vehicle #6** M1025 HMMWV	**Vehicle #8** M1025 HMMWV	**Vehicle #0** M1025 HMMWV
SGT (Sqd Leader) SPC (Gunner) PFC (Driver)	SGT (Sqd Leader) SPC (Gunner) PFC (Driver)	SGT (Sqd Leader) SPC (Gunner) PFC (Driver)	SGT (Sqd Leader) SPC (Gunner) PFC (Driver)

have a six-man crew, four of them being dismounts.

A solution for this problem until the RV is fielded could be to place a fourth scout on each HMMWV. This additional scout can act as a loader/assistant gunner while mounted and support patrols and OP/LP operations while dismounted. This will also allow two scouts to dismount, clearing forward of the HMMWV while the driver and gunner remain on the vehicle to cover the dismounts and maneuver the HMMWV forward.

The brigade reconnaissance troop scout platoons should continue to serve on HMMWVs until the new RV is fielded. The BRT scout platoons should have eight HMMWVs, not six. Eight HMMWVs with four-man crews will create a 32-soldier platoon, four soldiers less than the future six-vehicle RV platoon. The current 18-man, six-HMMWV platoon is simply not capable of accomplishing all the tasks required to ensure mission success. The BRT TOC should be a C2 LAV until the new Command Vehicle is fielded. This vehicle will support the communications needed and allow room for battle tracking.

The battalion task force scout platoons must be prepared to move ahead of the brigade reconnaissance troop at any time, and be the reconnaissance asset furthest forward on the battlefield. The BRT will not always be able to be forward of the task force scouts because there will be times that the brigade commander will use the BRT in another capacity, such as flank guard missions. Task force scouts must increase their optics capability, survivability, and capacity for extended operations in the reconnaissance battlespace. The following suggested modification to the battalion task force scout platoon addresses these problems, as well as others. The following is the proposed organization.

Enemy aircraft and air inserted dismounts are two of the greatest threats to reconnaissance assets forward on the battlefield. To counter the air threat, the gunners (noted with asterisks on the table), and their vehicle commanders, are to be trained as two-man MANPADS (Man-Portable Air Defense Systems) teams, and have Stinger missiles in their load plan. Scouts must only engage enemy air in the reconnaissance battlespace in self-defense, otherwise they may compromise the reconnaissance mission.

A medic and mechanic need to be permanently attached to the platoon, cross-trained in mounted and dismounted operations and the platoon's standard operating procedures. This cross-training is critical to the survivability of these assets working this far forward. Both the medic and the mechanic will be part of the platoon sergeant's CFV, which has the room for them and their equipment. The medic must be prepared to stabilize casualties for extended periods of time until exfiltration or medical evacuation. The mechanic must have the ability to adapt and overcome difficulties. His approach should be geared toward quick fixes to sustain operations until time permits proper corrective repairs.

Tactical Employment

The debate over the best scout vehicle is never-ending. Even today, as word gets out about the development of the new RV, critics line up to chide the future vehicles. But until these new vehicles are fielded, each type of vehicle we currently have has something to offer and should be integrated according to its capabilities to maximize mission success.

The deeper into enemy territory that scouts go, the lighter and quieter they must be. Scouts moving deep into the battlespace should be inserted by air or HMMWV to maximize stealth.

The closer you get to the main body in the brigade combat team, the greater the need to have reconnaissance assets with survivability and lethality. With the downsizing of the Force XXI task force and brigade combat teams, the task force and brigade commanders cannot risk the loss of their fighting assets in the reconnaissance fight.

In offensive operations, enemy reconnaissance must be defeated in the reconnaissance battlespace prior to committing the first task force. Enemy eyes on the brigade or task force main body have proved devastating on numerous occasions throughout history, and aggressive counterreconnaissance is a must. The forward task force company conducting counterreconnaissance should have a platoon designated to clear possible enemy OPs. Bradleys or tanks will fix and destroy enemy that the scouts have either lost contact with or cannot engage with indirect fire. Counterreconnaissance armor or air can also work with scouts in hunter/killer

teams. M3 CFVs in the task force scout platoons, working in depth, overwatching the light scout vehicles moving into sector, can also support in this role. The CFV has the optics and weapons range to provide this support in depth so as not to compromise stealth for the reconnaissance assets forward. These scout CFVs, forward with the scouts, will provide immediate support for the light scouts in a surprise meeting engagement, in turn increasing their survivability. Direct and indirect fires coordinated by the CFVs will also increase the likelihood of the scouts in contact successfully breaking contact and continuing with their mission.

With HMMWVs, CFVs, and LAVs forward on the battlefield, the enemy will not be sure what size or type of element they are facing. This confusion may cause the enemy to commit early, allowing greater warning and reaction time for friendly commanders.

The CFVs can support infiltration in echelon by providing overwatch for the initial teams moving into sector. The first echelons in sector then provide cover for the rest moving into sector from their set positions. This creates an umbrella of security and overwatch for the follow-on teams moving into sector, as well as attached assets such as NBC and smoke vehicles. The CFVs can also escort these assets moving into sector or act as gun support for medevac assets going forward.

CFVs organic to the task force scout platoons will support convoy and route security operations. They also support stability and support operations, in or out of MOUT environments. The task force scout CFVs can also be pushed forward, in an emergency, to support the brigade reconnaissance troop.

When conducting offensive operation planning, always plan operations to continue beyond the objective. The reconnaissance mission always takes follow-on missions into consideration and constantly leapfrogs reconnaissance assets forward of the task force early enough to provide the critical information needed to generate reconnaissance pull on the battlefield.

Because commanders want their reconnaissance assets in sector as soon as possible, task force scouts are either conducting resupply operations or are already moving into sector for the next mission during defensive operations. Because of this, the counterreconnaissance and screen line operations are best left to other units in the task force, such as the mechanized infantry. Once task force scouts get established in sector to support the next offensive operation, they will provide advance warning to the task force of approaching enemy and conduct battle handoff to the counterreconnaissance force if the enemy's destruction was not possible with indirect fires.

The brigade reconnaissance troop can further destroy enemy reconnaissance with indirect fires from their Strikers/ Colts if they are also forward. Task force scouts can conduct continuous operations forward for extended periods of time if they don't have to conduct screen line operations in the defense. This gives them the time needed to prepare for the next extended operation.

Conducting risk management and evaluating safety also includes the threat the enemy presents. Everyone, at all levels, must evaluate how to reduce this threat. Select routes that are outside enemy weapons range once proposed enemy positions are templated. Using Terrabase on the possible enemy positions will also allow you to see what the positions can and cannot see, and this will also help in route selection. Once the initial echelons are in sector, the CFVs in the follow-on echelons move in and clear these potential threat areas. The CFVs have a greater likelihood of survivability and defeating the enemy threat in a meeting engagement.

The communication scheme is also vital. One technique is for the task force scout platoon to have the S2 monitor the scout platoon net, allowing the scouts to be on the platoon net and the task force command net. Also preset is the indirect net, A&L and O&I, which act as the scout backup or alternate net, especially when the task force is in direct contact. It is also wise to preset the nets of the companies in the lead of the task force to provide real-time information directly to the elements getting ready to be in contact. During the reconnaissance fight, the intelligence is pushed up on platoon internal net by S2 eavesdropping as the reports come over the net. This provides real-time information. If S2 is having trouble monitoring the reports, they communicate to the scouts on task force command. This prevents the higher headquarters from tying up the platoon net.

Scouts will regularly paint the picture for the command and commander on the command net. Net discipline is very important to this technique. Once the task force is in contact, the command net becomes overwhelmed so most intelligence continues to be pushed up on the platoon internal net. Two scout vehicles will monitor platoon internal and task force O&I. These teams will ensure all reports are being received by S2 when the command net is tied up.

Communication must be a constant consideration in the planning phase of an operation. If terrain is going to limit transmissions, mutual communication support must be planned. Transmission limitations can be determined by a reconnaissance of the area of operation, and if this is not possible, by a map reconnaissance.

To sustain operations for more than 12 hours, section integrity must be maintained. A scout platoon of six HMMWVs maintaining section integrity has the capability to observe only one, maybe two NAIs. If two NAIs are tasked for an operation greater than 12 hours, the scout platoon will not be able to provide redundancy or depth on the tasked NAIs, and they are really in trouble if a scout team is compromised. For this reason, it is critical that a scout platoon be at least eight vehicles and that at least half these vehicles be four-man crews to facilitate dismounted operations. With the addition of four CFVs to the task force scout platoons, more NAIs will be covered in depth and the CFVs will provide the redundancy needed to ensure success with their optics and weapons range capability.

Using Recon Pull in the Attack

Scout offensive planning should be done in multiple phases. One of the phases is supporting the task force once they have executed operations and are in contact. This is done by pulling the task force through each security belt of the enemy, by having eyes deep initially covering these belts, and by continuously bounding scout teams forward, in depth, even after task force contact is made. The scout plan should also include a fire support plan, not only for the reconnaissance fight, but

also to support the task force while they are in contact, denying the enemy the ability to reposition and to take action against the task force.

Infiltrating scouts in depth, as well as assigning subsequent OPs in depth, will allow the commander to have eyes deep so that they can help pull the task force through identified weaknesses in the enemy's defensive belt.

The OP plan should have depth to allow overwatching security of the task force as it moves into sector. The recon plan can be triggered by the task force's arrival at identified phase lines. Then designated scout teams move to subsequent OPs, further in depth, to continue providing recon pull.

When time is limited, Bradleys and/or tanks should augment the scouts that are moving into sector in order to provide increased survivability and to overwatch scouts bounding to subsequent OPs. These weapon systems will also provide killing power forward to assist in fixing the CSOP and enemy counter-reconnaissance. Having Bradleys and tanks forward on the battlefield will also cause enemy confusion, possibly triggering his courses of action prematurely.

With eyes deep, pulling the task force to the enemy's weak points in each layer of defense, the task force's likelihood of success will be greater.

Infiltration Techniques Vs Traditional Techniques

Scout infiltration and exfiltration has been addressed for the first time in *FM 17-98* (dated April 1999), Chapter 3, Section 7. This manual only scratches the surface of this technique, yet it has proven to be extremely successful in numerous environments and situations.

The intent of infiltration and exfiltration is to move using the most secure route to ensure that the scouts are not detected. Infiltration and exfiltration can take place both mounted and dismounted. While it is common for dismounted teams to use infiltration techniques to prevent detection, few perfect this skill mounted.

An example of scout infiltration could be a scout section moving into the area of operation using infiltration techniques prior to committing the rest of the scout platoon. Once they are set, they can conduct a zone recon from their set position and provide overwatch for the rest of the scouts as they move through the sector conducting the conventional zone reconnaissance. The rest of the platoon would then focus on the dead space of the set section and the area the set section cannot observe. This set element can also provide direct and indirect support to any of the scouts who come into contact, and can help them maneuver to break contact. This increased security for those executing the conventional zone reconnaissance will increase their survivability and success. Most of the critical tasks of a zone reconnaissance can be accomplished from a set point, on key terrain with the last teams moving conventionally into sector, clearing the dead space of those teams already set. This technique of zone recon also reduces the chance of meeting engagements and being compromised, yet still meets the commander's intent of clearing the zone. Infiltration can also be used to get teams deep into sector, quickly, in offensive operations, in order to put eyes on the enemy defensive belt for timely reporting. This will give the commander the intelligence required to choose his course of action prior to committing his task force or brigade combat team. This technique also allows for overwatch of the other teams moving into sector, teams doing a detailed obstacle report, or teams executing a stealth breach. Infiltration has also proven a successful movement technique to get to NAIs and TAIs for Scout/Colt teams. In dismounted operations, a sniper team can be infiltrated to a key position and provide intelligence and cover to the dismounted team moving into sector. Sniper teams can also provide cover for teams dismounted conducting reconnaissance on obstacles, bridges, and so on.

Primary and alternate infiltration and exfiltration routes should be well planned. They should be reconnoitered by land or air when possible, but a map reconnaissance must be done at a minimum. Terrabase should always be used, if time permits, to proof the routes and proposed OP locations. Terrabase will not only allow you to maximize the terrain, but also identify possible enemy positions that can observe you, which will help in development of the fire support planning and give an area of focus for those moving into sector. Infiltration routes should also be placed on CSS graphics as routes to conduct CASEVAC and emergency resupply. These routes can also help in determining casualty collection/handoff points for the supporting units pushing forward supporting CASEVAC operations.

Successful infiltration routes should be maximized. If one team was successful, use the same, secure route for all the other teams that are moving into the same area of operation. Using the same, successful route will also allow the later sections moving into sector to be covered by the sections that initially moved in and are set, allowing the later sections to have a relatively safe route until they leapfrog past the furthest forward section.

The speed in which infiltration is conducted varies as per METT-TC (mission, enemy, time, terrain and weather, troops, and civilian considerations). On most missions, there will be times that the vehicle rarely goes above an idle, with scouts frequently dismounting forward clearing the way, increasing infiltration success. There will be other times that intelligence may show that it is a race for key terrain and, with overwatch already established in depth, speed will be essential.

Successful route selection and infiltration must be constantly trained and rehearsed in order to remain proficient. Infiltration and exfiltration lane training is relatively easy to coordinate and conduct.

Infiltrate in Echelons

If a scout becomes compromised, the enemy can template our doctrinal formations at the location, and locate most of the scouts moving into sector. A way to overcome this is by infiltrating in echelons, that is, allowing staggered infiltration of teams or sections at different times. This technique will prevent the entire task force scout platoon or brigade reconnaissance troop from being compromised while moving into sector.

This technique also allows the teams that are compromised while moving into sector, to be replaced by those teams moving into sector at a later time. This increases the likelihood that the most important NAIs/TAIs are covered. This will also prevent teams from having to shift laterally, forward on the battlefield, or to replace compromised OPs, which would increase the risk, and decrease survivability.

Infiltration by echelon also allows the scout leader to move assets into sector almost immediately, with minimum guidance, while the parent task force or brigade combat team is still in the R&S development phase. This will allow eyes deep quickly, providing information for the commander to assist in the planning process. The scouts can also provide overwatch for the teams moving into sector once the R&S plan is developed. S2 intelligence and R&S planning should drive the infiltration timeline. Infiltration times should be random and allow earlier departing teams time to be successful in their infiltration, so those successful routes can be used by the follow-on teams.

Being able to anticipate the commander's intent for the upcoming mission and analyzing the terrain in the area of operation will allow the placement of the first echelon moving into sector relatively close to where they will be needed in the R&S plan. Their infiltration route and set point is also planned to support communications and provide overwatch security for the other teams moving into sector at a later time. With the integration of the brigade reconnaissance troop, it will be critical that task force scouts maintain the freedom to maneuver and replace the brigade reconnaissance teams that become compromised. This will allow the brigade combat team commander to have eyes on those NAIs critical to him, and in turn, critical to the task force as well. We must be careful not to strip away the reconnaissance assets needed by the task force commander as the brigade reconnaissance troop becomes depleted. The task force commander must have his scouts to conduct reconnaissance pull of the task force on the battlefield.

Reconnaissance Forward

The creation of the brigade reconnaissance troop greatly eases the burden of the task force scouts deploying too far forward of the task force. But the task force scouts must still be prepared to be the most forward element of the brigade combat team, if the BRT is conducting resupply, flank, or rear operations. The task force must also be prepared to conduct forward passage of lines through the brigade reconnaissance troop. In the event the brigade reconnaissance troop is forward of the task force scouts, the battlespace must be tied in, in depth, between these elements to ensure effective battle handoff and a seamless reconnaissance blanket forward of the brigade combat team.

Task force scouts must become more situationally aware of friendly forces forward, as well as active MSRs through their sector. This much activity forward is something scouts may not be used to.

BRT-Task Force Scouts Coordination

Coordination between all the assets in the reconnaissance battlespace must be continuous. The task force scouts and brigade reconnaissance troop must know where each other are at all times. Task force scouts must know the mission of the brigade reconnaissance troop and be prepared to replace them on short notice. Yet it is critical that the task force commander is not stripped of his reconnaissance assets due to attrition of the brigade reconnaissance troop.

Flank and rear coordination must be conducted in detail. Brigade and task force scouts must keep one another informed and make battle handoffs seamless. The only way this can happen is through constant training, with all scouts in the brigade combat team working off the same type of standard operating procedure. This will allow cross-leveling to accomplish the mission and standardization of how these missions are done. Brigade reconnaissance troop scouts and task force scouts must frequently drop to each other's frequencies to cross-talk and coordinate. Mutual CSS support must be the norm.

The higher headquarters of both these scout units must be charged with ensuring that coordination is conducted, drills are rehearsed with each other, information and cross-talk is continuous, and that the plan has them tied into each other to allow battle handoff. Training should be regularly planned to exercise this coordination and mission execution. Other common training should be done together as well, such as gunnery and simulation exercises.

Brigade reconnaissance symposiums to standardize operating procedures and present new ideas should be held semi-annually, at a minimum. The forum should allow free expression and creative, out-of-the-box thinking. The focus will always be on how to conduct better reconnaissance, ensure survivability, and achieve mission success. The scout SOP is a living document and should be constantly refined. These symposiums will allow dissemination of these refinements. SOPs should be annotated and refinements noted until the updates are published, then the process starts all over again. Although there is little written here on coordination, it is one of the most critical aspects of success in the reconnaissance fight. With all the assets now in the reconnaissance battlespace, poor coordination may prove fatal.

Maximize Dismounted Scouts

Dismounted scout teams have proven very successful in all environments. Conduct dismounted training regularly, in all environments, under numerous conditions, to develop the standardization and confidence needed to conduct dismounted operations. Dismounted operations are common in Stability And Support Operations. The frequency of these operations has greatly increased Army-wide, creating a greater need to sustain dismounted skills.

Dismounted teams should be designated in each section, and they should be ready to dismount at a moment's notice. Their equipment is pre-packed with an emphasis on sustaining survivability and communications. These teams must constantly dismount and clear forward of their vehicles to prevent enemy observation. There may be times that dismounted teams will virtually ground-guide their vehicles, while infiltrating, to prevent detection. Dismount teams or sniper teams can dismount, and establish themselves on dominant terrain, acting as overwatch for both mounted and dismounted operations. Dismounted teams are sent out every time a section gets set. This will provide redundancy within the section on its NAI.

This dismounted team may have the follow-on mission to move deeper into sector to cover subsequent NAIs without compromising vehicles. These teams may also act as overwatch for their own section's vehicles as they displace to their subsequent NAIs. These teams also increase the overall operational capability of the platoons. Unlike OPs, these teams are not at a fixed location relying on constant resupply from their vehicles. They are an independent, self-sustaining team that work like the highly successful OPFOR DRT teams of the National Training Center. To meet the capabilities stated above, the manpower must be adjusted

as discussed in the manning section of this article.

Sniper team employment has proved a formidable overwatching force. Sniper teams provide security in depth and a well camouflaged OP that can gather intelligence of an area of operation prior to committing the units that the sniper team will overwatch. The use of sniper teams has been more frequent since the increase in Stability And Support Operations. One example of employing these scout snipers is when they provide cover to soldiers conducting peacekeeping operations. These soldiers must work in close proximity to the local population. The snipers provide overwatching security without alarming the non-combatants.

These additional dismount teams will increase overall survivability of scouts in the area of operation and provide the capability to conduct stay-behind operations or shift teams that are already in depth with minimal signature and risk of detection.

We must be creative in how we infiltrate and resupply our mounted and dismounted scouts. For dismounted operations, maintenance helicopters are sometimes available when others are not. OH-58 scout helicopters conducting reconnaissance in sector can conduct poncho parachute drops to resupply dismounts in sector. Supplies can be cached to allow self-resupply or resupply for stay-behind forces. Resupply can also be done by mounted scouts carrying three-day packages. Supplies are cross-leveled to those scouts staying in the area of operation prior to the vehicle moving to the resupply point. Resupply packages, called push packages, should already be assembled and ready to be pushed forward at a moment's notice. This package can be an independent LOGPAC, or it can be pushed forward with the LOGPAC of the lead company team, and this company team can provide security as the scouts resupply and prep for follow-on operations. Coordination with the company team 1SGs is critical for emergency resupply.

Dismounted teams must maximize the use of equipment that will increase their survivability and success. Ghillie suits are great for concealment and can be made by the soldiers using burlap sandbags. Thermal blankets are light weight and can reduce thermal signature and help prevent detection from thermal sights of enemy aircraft or vehicles.

Specialized training should be conducted to increase survivability and success in dismounted operations. Schools that support these operations are Ranger School, Sniper Course, Air Assault School, Pathfinder School, and the Long Range Surveillance Unit (LRSU) Course.

Scouts will always need to dismount, if for no other reason than to clear a danger area forward of their vehicle. Dismounted scouts have a greater survivability rate and must be maximized. Training must focus on dismounted operations and standardizing how these operations are conducted. Dismounted training is also an inexpensive way to train the fundamentals and develop standard operating procedures.

Training

Training must be done using task, condition, and standards. Planning training with the crawl, walk, run technique allows everyone to progress together. Crawl and walk training should be constantly critiqued during and after the training. When training is being conducted at a run, it should always be evaluated, preferably by a external source, to allow multiple perspectives. All training, and everything else done by the soldiers, must be done with combat in mind. A warfighting focus is a must. We train how we fight; we fight how we trained.

We must retrain the basics. Although thinking outside the box must be encouraged, an understanding of the basics is a must in order to develop new TTPs.

Throughout history, poor land navigation has proved deadly to scouts, whether it was inaccurate location reporting for indirect fire or veering off course and maneuvering across the front of a flank unit without coordination, as in Desert Storm. We must constantly train land navigation without the aid of navigational equipment. Scouts must be prepared to use any technique of navigation. Once these skills are perfected, then we must teach the use of navigational aids. Scouts must learn how to maximize all their navigational tools.

Also, we must constantly practice reporting procedures. A recommended change to the contact report is adding *location* to identification, direction, and enemy type. The location does not need to be precise; it just needs to give a general location in the event support begins moving that way or communications are lost after the initial report. This must be drilled until it is second nature. This report should be followed up with a SALT-Y (Your actions and recommendations) report that is clear and precise. Always report exactly what is seen. As these reports begin to get pushed up, all scouts must be prepared to paint the picture of the battlefield to the commander.

Training emphasis should be placed on basic crew level drills such as establishing an OP, actions in response to the seven forms of contact (mounted and dismounted), and moving tactically mounted or dismounted. Standardize these and other basic drills and regularly rehearse and evaluate them in detail. Capture or death is imminent if drills like actions on contact are not automatic.

Training teamwork and cohesiveness is also critical. Teamwork develops trust and confidence among soldiers. It develops mutual support to overcome each other's weaknesses, and ensures a formidable team capable of overcoming any task or mission.

Scouts must be trained to constantly find ways to support their task force and brigade combat team, even if they meet their reconnaissance objective. Any soldier on the battlefield can be the combat multiplier that ensures victory. All scouts must understand the commander's intent, and the plan of how the battle is to unfold. He must know how to use all his combat multipliers to help influence the battle. This can be done by guiding air assets onto targets, or marking targets with direct fire for tanks and Bradleys to identify and destroy. Scouts can also screen task force and brigade combat team movement by dropping smoke and indirect fires on threat targets such as antitank ambushes. Scout snipers engaging vehicle commanders and possible key leaders will also add to the battlefield confusion. Scouts must maintain battlefield awareness so they can talk directly to the company teams or platoons about to make contact in order to give timely reports and talk them onto targets.

Training should also include coordination with those battlefield multipliers that support the reconnaissance fight. The use of mortars to conduct mortar raids is an example of this. Terrain such

as the National Training Center and Korea can reduce the effectiveness of artillery and MLRS. The extreme angles of the hills and mountains and the inability of artillery to strike the reverse slope of this high ground provides cover for the enemy. There may also be times that artillery and MLRS are not available. To overcome these shortfalls, mortars can conduct a raid.

An example of this use at the National Training Center would be scouts identifying a task force still in their trucks in 114 wadi, behind the Iron Triangle. Because the brigade combat team and artillery are at the far eastern end of the central corridor, the artillery cannot hit this area behind the mountain. The mortars dismount their tubes from their vehicles and sling load them under helicopters into the battlespace. They set up on the opposite side of the valley from the enemy contact in a hide position, which allows virtual line of sight and prevents the mountain from acting as cover.

Some of the mortars provide immediate security, and scouts in the area provide security as well. Mortars fire their mission and the scout team, observing the enemy, conducts battle damage assessment. The mortars are then air-extracted, the enemy are destroyed, and the entire fire mission took only 8-10 minutes total. This operation applies to virtually any environment world-wide. Mortars should regularly rehearse this type of operation with scouts and it should be standardized and published in the unit's standard operating procedures.

Hand-to-hand combat training should be a regular part of the training schedule. It is not only a weapon and a warfighting skill, but a confidence and morale builder that helps develop the warfighter spirit and focus, and it is a great program to incorporate into the current physical fitness program.

Training is the cornerstone to success on the battlefield. How we train is how we fight.

Gunnery

We must re-teach the basics of gunnery with a focus on the fundamentals, such as the eight steady-hold factors for the M-16. Precision marksmanship should be the only firing done until the soldier develops the skill to consistently make tight shot groups. This ensures his understanding of the fundamentals and will likely increase his capabilities overall.

A gunnery density should be developed that includes every individual and crew-served weapon, as well as hand grenades, demolitions, and hand-to-hand combat. Primary marksmanship and gunnery skills training and testing for each weapon must be completed prior to shooting. This training and testing must be hands-on and written. Ensuring these fundamentals are understood prior to going to the range prevents this training from taking away from range time. Everyone in the scout platoons should receive this training, whatever their position, so that everyone is familiar with all the weapon systems and is capable of using them in emergency situations. Once the basics are mastered, gunnery skills must be brought to the next level.

Training should consider employment of each weapon in all environments, including MOUT. We must maximize the use of every weapon, for example using the MK 19 as a indirect weapon. Gunners will fire weapons from range card information in limited visibility with the observer OP being the only one that can visually identify the targets and call corrections. Other examples are hand-held laser designators marking targets to be engaged, and making field-expedient bangalores from C-4 and pickets, to create hasty or stealth breaches. Live-fire training should also reflect realistic scenarios that scouts may face, such as surprise meeting engagements while mounted, a dismounted squad breaking contact, or engaging targets with non-combatants intermixed with threat targets (yet another lesson learned in Somalia). Multiple weapon systems should be used simultaneously, for example a dismounted squad or OP breaking contact with individual and crew-served weapons while their vehicle calls indirect fires and provides suppressive fires for their displacement. This type of training should be multi-echelon as well. For example, scouts identify the enemy moving in sector during a counter-reconnaissance operation, but the enemy is too close to use indirect fires. The scout calls forward the supporting tank or Bradley unit. Once they are in position, the scout marks the enemy with direct fire and the supporting unit identifies and destroys the enemy. This can be done with air assets too. Scouts should refine their skills with their primary weapon system during gunnery as well, calling indirect fire. Every scout must know how to plan indirect fires to support their reconnaissance operations or OPs. They must know how to register illumination, develop triggers, and pre-plot linear sheaths on main avenues of approach. Scouts should also be trained in the use of a GLLD. Small arms training should include training with night sights in limited visibility, as well as scopes in daylight, engaging at long range, and training overwatch/covering teams.

Gunnery training should start with small arms training and qualification developing into mounted gunnery. Maneuver training should parallel gunnery, starting with individual and crew-level drills and developing into platoon-level drills such as platoon actions at an obstacle. These two training focuses should conclude with exercises that combine both: A squad and section live-fire, mounted and dismounted, that exercises actions on contact and a platoon-level live-fire that integrates other battlefield multipliers, such as artillery, mortars, and task force or brigade combat team assets as previously mentioned. CASEVAC should also be exercised under these realistic conditions.

Critical Equipment

The scout platoon should be self supportive in the area of operation for at least 72 hours. Scout platoons should be supplied for three days of continuous operations. Every HMMWV should have four 5-gallon water cans, two 5-gallon fuel cans, and three day's worth of MREs. CFVs will require more because of larger crews. This will also allow scouts to cross-level and resupply stay-behind teams and dismounted teams moving further in depth. Some of these extra items can be carried externally on the HMMWV on racks mounted on the back of the vehicles.

Unique supplies should be purchased to sustain the operational tempo of the scout platoon. Because the platoon does not normally LOGPAC for three days, each vehicle should have a stove to heat meals and water when the opportunity is available. Each vehicle should have Thermoses as well. Items like Gatorade and vitamins should be considered to replenish minerals and electrolytes lost in continuous operations. Other items previously discussed are lightweight thermal blankets and ghillie suits.

Retrans teams in scout platoons will allow scouts to focus on obtaining the best eyes on their NAIs instead of finding the location that allows the best communications.

TO&E operational equipment is a large problem in today's scout platoon. As already stated, inadequate optics on the HMMWVs force scouts to get so close to the enemy that indirect fires cannot be used to break contact. In some cases, this takes away their primary weapon system. Advanced optics are slowly filtering into the Army inventories, but spotter scopes, telescopes, and scopes for individual weapons can be purchased now to bridge this shortfall. A stabilized weapon with a scope on it greatly increases daytime optics. M-4 carbines must be issued to scouts, along with sniper rifles and MP-5 submachine guns, or some other small, lightweight machine gun for operations in MOUT and SASO type operations. The M240B machine gun is a great weapon, but it's too large and heavy for extended dismounted operations or MOUT and SASO operations. Another problem is that modern scout platoons are reconnoitering for an armored force, yet, without CFVs, they do not have the capability to defeat heavy armor in a meeting engagement to allow them to break contact. This problem can be solved by adding CFVs to the task force scout platoons and putting Javelins, or some other type of AT weapon, on the HMMWVs. Scouts also need hand-held laser designators to mark targets so that supporting units, air or ground, can destroy them. This will be very beneficial in the counter-reconnaissance fight.

Sling load equipment should be part of the load plan on all HMMWVs. This equipment will not only help in insertion and extraction, but in aerial resupply as well.

Communication is absolutely critical to mission success. Scout platoon vehicles must have two radios, and each section needs another radio in the manpacks to support the dismounted teams. Scout sections should have SATCOM capability also. Hands-free communication is also needed between dismounts and can also be used by HMMWV commanders to communicate with their gunners. Non-secure, hand-held radios, like Motorola Walkabouts with ear pieces, work well to resolve this problem. They are light, small, and easy to use. Radio discipline must ensure that no secure information is passed on these radios.

Equipment is critical to survivability and mission success. Although the Army has a lot of great equipment on the way, we must find ways to bridge the gap until this new equipment is fielded.

Retrans Teams Organic To Scout Platoons

Retrans teams in scout platoons will allow scouts to focus on obtaining the best eyes on their NAIs instead of finding the location that allows the best communications. The brigade reconnaissance troop should have a retrans team in each platoon. If the task force scout platoon or brigade reconnaissance troop commander is forced to develop a plan around communications, reconnaissance assets are lost to the retrans mission or, the commander is not getting the most from his intelligence gatherers.

Having the retrans team organic to the scout platoon will also allow the team to be trained in infiltration and scouting techniques, thus increasing their survivability. They must always be part of the R&S planning process and may have a follow-on mission to retrans for the task force or brigade combat team as they move into sector.

Employment of the retrans team needs to be creative as well. In brigade operations, task forces may be conducting operations on line. METT-TC may dictate that, in this type of operation, the retrans team working for the flanking task force may be able to provide better retrans capability than their own. The terrain at the National Training Center is a good example of this type of environment. Retrans teams on the high ground of the opposite side of the valley from the scouts in sector may give them greater retrans success. A retrans team on the opposite wall has a greater line of sight with the scouts operating in sector, increasing successful communication, versus retrans in depth with limited line of sight. Coordinate with the flanking task force to successfully execute this mission. Scouts operating in depth must be prepared to support communications, whether relaying information or acting as a retrans site. All scouts should have retrans cables. It is critical that scouts not be tasked with retrans as their only mission; this will cause the loss of an invaluable reconnaissance asset. The loss of a single scout to such a mission can seriously affect the successful execution of the R&S plan.

R&S planning must consider communications, but they should focus on the reconnaissance objective, not purely communications. On the other hand, a scout that cannot communicate is no longer an asset to his commander.

Maintenance Support

As already stated, to increase operational readiness, a vehicle mechanic should be permanently attached to the task force scout platoons and cross-trained. If a mechanic is not in the platoons of the brigade reconnaissance troop, there should be one as the 1SG's driver to act as the forward maintenance contact for the troop. The 1SG should be on an LAV-type vehicle to allow more room for equipment and armor protection for CASEVAC and maintenance support forward.

The mechanics should have a Battle Damage Repair kit to perform repairs on vehicles that are still deployed in the area of operation. Some of the items in the kit could be tire patch kits, fuel tank patch kits, CV boots, spare belts, glow plugs, and so on. The mechanic will also verify 5988s and parts requests before they are pushed back to ensure accuracy while sustaining operations. The mechanic will also install parts pushed forward when time permits. All of this will increase operational readiness and facilitate accurate maintenance reporting.

Scout vehicles should have the highest priority in maintenance while deployed in operations because of their continuous operations. There must be minimal maintenance downtime due to the limited number of scout vehicles already available. The loss of a single vehicle and crew can be devastating to a reconnaissance mission. The level of priority while deployed should be so high that the scout platoon mechanic can go to

the nearest unit and take the parts needed to sustain vehicle operations.

Having the platoon sergeant on a CFV for task force scouts and the 1SG on a LAV-type vehicle in the brigade reconnaissance troop will greatly increase maintenance and recovery support. A tow bar can be easily secured to these vehicles, but not to a HMMWV. These vehicles also have room to carry the Battle Damage Repair kit and other assets needing to be pushed forward to the scout platoons. The CFV can negotiate terrain that the HMMWV cannot, and both the CFV and the LAV will increase recovery capability. This will allow greater self-recovery and prevent non-organic recovery assets from being pushed forward into the reconnaissance battlespace, or worse yet, the loss of a reconnaissance asset for the R&S fight until a task force pushes forward to their location.

If a scout vehicle must be pushed back for maintenance, every effort must be made to replace that vehicle. If this is not possible, then most, if not all of the crew, must remain forward conducting operations. These crews can be infiltrated into the area of operation as dismounted teams. They can also be cross-leveled into the other sections to beef them up to support mounted and dismounted operations. All key equipment, like extra communications, optics, ammo, and rations need to be cross-leveled from the downed vehicle and distributed to the other scouts when time permits. These resources will be needed to support the soldiers operating forward.

CASEVAC

A CSS overlay must be made and disseminated to each vehicle, higher command, and anyone else who is part of the coordination. The CSS overlay should have the Main Supply Routes, Casualty Collection Points, and Logistical Release Points. It should also have the infiltration routes to each OP for CASEVAC and emergency resupply purposes. This will give supporting units preplanned infiltration routes. The scouts already forward in sector will also have an idea which way the support is coming from, so they can provide overwatch for them. These routes should be numbered to prevent confusion in coordination. It is also important that the scouts already in sector inform the supporting effort which route was successfully used so they to can capitalize on this success. CASEVAC is part of the R&S plan and designates which units will support the CASEVAC throughout each phase of the operation. The supporting effort is usually the unit closest to the forward elements. Face-to-face coordination with each supporting unit must be made by the scout unit going forward. Time is always limited, so the task force platoon sergeant or brigade reconnaissance troop 1SG should anticipate this coordination and start this process immediately. The platoon sergeant/1SG continues to develop the CSS overlay during coordination. He also continues to collect the information for paragraph's four and five of the operations order. When the operations order is given, the platoon sergeant/1SG gives these two paragraphs to the platoon leader, allowing him to focus on the tactical aspects of the mission. Requested indirect fire support can also be coordinated by the senior scout, once approved by the platoon leader, to allow the platoon leader time for his meetings and tactical planning.

The task force scout platoon sergeant's CFV, or the brigade reconnaissance troop 1SG's LAV, provides some armor protection while conducting casualty evacuation, whereas the HMMWV provides very little. Since there is also a greater likelihood of contact when moving to conduct casualty evacuations, the CFV and LAV provide greater firepower to survive this contact, and can lay suppressive fires, if need be, to execute the evacuation. These vehicles also have the room inside to support CASEVAC, as opposed to the HMMWV. All of these shortfalls proved to be critical when evacuating casualties while in contact in Mogadishu, Somalia.

In the event that another unit pushes MEDEVAC assets forward to scouts that had contact, tank, Bradley, or helicopter gunship escorts should always be planned and used. Air evacuations must also be maximized. The nine-line MEDEVAC request format should be mounted by the radio on every vehicle. All scouts must be able to establish a landing zone and be able to secure it.

There should also be at least one combat lifesaver with a combat lifesaver bag on every scout vehicle. Ideally, every scout will be a combat lifesaver. Scouts should periodically practice giving one another IVs while conducting training as well; this will reinforce their combat lifesaver training and develop a trust in each other's abilities.

Conclusion

This article was not written to be the cure-all of all the problems in the reconnaissance community. My intent is to share ideas that have proved successful for me as a task force scout platoon sergeant. I feel we are on track developing the reconnaissance force of the future; my only concern is that we do not become too dependent on artificial intelligence gatherers. The lack of human intelligence (HUMINT) and the reliance on other intelligence sources in the late 1970s and early 1980s caused great confusion on several operations, such as the Panama invasion, Grenada, and the Iranian hostage rescue attempt. The reliance on battlefield shapers like air and artillery before the direct fight, also require reconnaissance forward to identify these targets, assess battle damage and enemy disposition continuously. Then, once the task force or brigade combat team commits to the battlespace, reconnaissance assets must talk these forces onto targets and conduct reconnaissance pull to allow survivability and success on the battlefield. Artificial intelligence gatherers cannot paint this kind of picture and recommend courses of action. We must never forget: Those who win the reconnaissance fight tend to win the battle as well.

I would like to thank COL John B. Musser II for teaching me, long ago, to think outside the box, and LTC John M. Tisson for allowing me to work that way.

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